National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Service
Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

NL-339 (r. 88/04) c

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

DEAF STUDENTS' DIALOGUE JOURNALS: A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

BY

SUSAN ELAINE GREAVES

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1991

National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Service
Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-70276-1

Canada

S

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: Susan Elaine Greaves

TITLE OF THESIS: Deaf Students' Dialogue Journals: A Linguistic Analysis

DEGREE: Master of Education

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: Fall 1991

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.

Susan Greaves

Susan Greaves
9827 - 84 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6E 2G1

Dated: Sept. 13/91

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Deaf Students' Dialogue Journals: A Linguistic Analysis submitted by Susan Elaine Greaves in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Dr. Bruce Bain (Supervisor)

Dr. Ceinwen Cumming

Dr. Helen Ilott

Dr. Jerome D. Schein

Dated: Sept. 13/91

Abstract

This thesis presents an exploratory study into the written conversation of three grade nine deaf students and their teacher. The data consisted of two samples of handwritten dialogue taken from the classroom dialogue journals of each of the students. The dialogues were written between each student and his or her teacher. First, the students' and teacher's sentences were coded according to their pragmatic language function; subsequently, elements of three components of language were analyzed in the students' individual sentences: pragmatics (language function), semantics (clarity of meaning), and syntax (grammaticality). Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to discern patterns and trends in the students' competence in written conversation. The results support the view that approaches to language analysis should include pragmatic and semantic, as well as syntactic, methods of analysis. Further, with writers of junior-high age, analysis of discourse level elements would appear to be an important component in determining the linguistic benefits of dialogue journal use.

Acknowlegement

Conducting this research project has been a valuable and stimulating experience. I would like to express my gratitude to those whose contributions were integral to its completion.

First, to my supervisor, Dr. Bruce Bain, who guided this project enthusiastically throughout. My committee members, Dr. Ceinwen Cumming, Dr. Jerome D. Schein, and Dr. Helen Ilott, assisted with key suggestions and generous support throughout all stages of the research and writing.

I am indebted to the three junior-high students who trusted a researcher unknown to them with the personal writings of their dialogue journals. Especially, I am grateful to their teacher, who presented her students with the opportunity to contribute to this research - her enthusiastic cooperation was much appreciated.

A personal note of thanks to Lorna McNary, who provided the conversational TDD transcript which led this researcher into the fascinating study of written conversation and which provided the impetus for this thesis.

Finally, to my husband D'Arcy, whose support and encouragement made everything possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

I INTRODUCTION 1
Background and Rationale
Objectives
Definition of Terms
Outline

II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 9
Link Between Spoken and Written Language
Early Linguistic Experiences:Implications for Literacy
Literacy Problems of Deaf Children
Dialogue Journals and Literacy
How Dialogue Journals Work
Dialogue Journals and Literacy Teaching
Dialogue Journal Research With Deaf Children
Dialogue Journals: Research Implications

III METHODOLOGY 27
Participants
Data
Analysis

IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 37
Overview of Students' Results
Overview of the Teacher's Writing: Pragmatics
Dyad Profiles

V IMPLICATIONS 71
Dialogue Journals and Communicative Competence
Dialogue Journals as a Teaching Technique
Limitations of the Study
Summary and Conclusion

REFERENCES 86

APPENDIX A 91
Language Function Categories

APPENDIX B 97
Request for Participation
Consent Form

APPENDIX C 100
Dialogue Journal Samples

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE PAGE

1-L 63
Sample Size: Sentences, Language Functions, Language Function Categories, and Multi-Function Sentences - Laura and Teacher

2-L 63
Percentage of Language Functions Used: Laura and Teacher

3-L 64
Most Commonly Used Functions: Laura and Teacher

4-L 64
Sentence Level Analysis of Pragmatics, Semantics and Syntax: Laura

5-L 64
Word Level Analysis of Syntactic Violations: Laura

1-S 65
Sample Size: Sentences, Language Functions, Language Function Categories, and Multi-Function Sentences - Scott and Teacher

2-S 65
Percentage of Language Functions Used: Scott and Teacher

3-S 66
Most Commonly Used Functions: Scott and Teacher

4-S 66
Sentence Level Analysis of Pragmatics, Semantics and Syntax: Scott

5-S 66
Word Level Analysis of Syntactic Violations: Scott

1-B 67
Sample Size: Sentences, Language Functions, Language Function Categories, and Multi-Function Sentences - Bill and Teacher

2-B 67
Percentage of Language Functions Used: Bill and Teacher

LIST OF TABLES (cont.)

TABLE PAGE

3-B 68
Most Commonly Used Functions:
Bill and Teacher

4-B 68
Sentence Level Analysis of Pragmatics,
Semantics and Syntax: Bill

5-B 68
Word Level Analysis of Syntactic Violations:
Bill

6. Function Clusters 69

7. Percentage of Function Clusters Used: 69
Laura, Scott, Bill and Teacher

8. Teacher's Use of Function Clusters 70
By Dialogue Partner

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an exploratory study designed to investigate linguistic components of content, form, and use in the dialogue journal writing of three junior-high deaf students and their teacher. The intent was firstly to compare the students' use of pragmatic language functions with the teacher's, and secondly, to identify patterns in the students' linguistic performance with respect to sentence level measures of three main components of language: pragmatics, semantics, and syntax. The data consisted of two samples of written conversation taken from each student's classroom dialogue journal. The results were considered with respect to the effects of dialogue journal use on the three students' skill in written conversation. The background and rationale for the study, research objectives, definition of terms, and outline of the thesis, are presented in this chapter.

Background and Rationale

The problem is well documented: educators of the deaf have been unsuccessful in instilling basic, functional levels of literacy in a majority of their students (Wood, Wood, Griffiths, & Howarth, 1986); Canadian Association of the Deaf [CAD], 1989). Extensive reviews of the literature,

dating from the second decade of this century, have consistently shown that the majority of deaf children do not achieve beyond a fourth grade reading level on standardized reading tests (Kretschmer & Kretschmer, 1978; Moores, 1982; Quigley & Paul, 1984). Measures of written English, while less standardized, similarly show that the majority of deaf students are unable to produce English text that is syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically competent (Kretschmer & Kretschmer, 1978; Moores, 1982; Quigley & Paul, 1984).

In spite of the difficulties that written English poses for many deaf persons, written communication is an extremely important link among deaf persons and between the deaf and hearing communities. The uses of literacy among deaf adults "are largely conversational, personal, and instrumental" (Maxwell, 1985, p.205). Writing is used daily for noneducational, social purposes "in the home, in public [and] on the job" (p.205). Arguing that literacy is used in different ways and for different purposes within the culture of deafness, Maxwell criticizes educational policy for the deaf which "has failed to take into account attitudes toward language and language mode, the actual uses of language and mode by deaf persons, and the social organization of deaf persons" (p.207). Given that many deaf people routinely use written communication to supplement speech and/or sign,

Mallory (1991), suggests that using literacy for practical, communicative situations may be a worthwhile component of deaf students' education.

For years, research into the language abilities of hearing impaired children has been based on theories of language that emphasize structural elements such as morphology, syntax, and grammar. This orientation has similarly dominated educational approaches to the development of expressive language (speech and/or sign) and literacy with this population. The deficit model approach has been common: deaf children's speech and/or writing is compared with that of hearing children and analyzed for missing or incorrect elements (Webster, 1986).

More recent linguistic theory posits that the desire to communicate a message - pragmatics - forms the basis for semantic and syntactic development. Within this view, competent communication involves mastery of all three linguistic components.

The notion of communicative competence in writing may be an important factor in improving the literacy levels of deaf students. Lacking a well-developed base in the structure of spoken English, deaf children's task of cracking the written code is further compounded by ineffectively abstract lessons

in vocabulary, syntax, and grammar (Wood et al., 1986). This is a major obstacle in deaf education and one for which solutions are still being sought.

One promising approach is in the use of written conversations to help deaf students "bridge the gap" between spoken and written English. Most commonly, these occur in the form of classroom dialogue journals written privately and individually between a teacher and each of her students.

Research into the use of dialogue journals with young deaf chidren has supported the contention that dialogue journal use can enhance their reading and writing abilities (Staton, 1985). However, at the post elementary level, grammatical improvement as a result of dialogue journal use has, on the whole, not been supported, although a number of other educational benefits have been documented (Staton, 1990). In evaluating linguistic performance at the sentence (as opposed to discourse) level, dialogue journal studies, like most other studies of deaf students' writing, have focused on improvement in one linguistic component, grammar or syntax. To date, studies of deaf students' dialogue journals have not addressed sentence level improvements in two other important linguistic elements, pragmatics and semantics.

Accordingly, the present study was designed to document

patterns and trends in students' dialogue journal sentences with respect to pragmatics, semantics and syntax. Thus, the rationale for the study was to explore changes or improvements in any of these three areas, with a view to providing directions for further dialogue journal research with this population.

Objectives

In order to explore the linguistic benefits of dialogue journal use, the study had two specific objectives: 1) to code the students' and teacher's sentences according to their pragmatic language function, and 2) to analyze each of the students' sentences with respect to pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic integrity. The students' and teacher's use of pragmatic language functions was compared, and patterns in the students' pragmatics, semantics and syntax were described.

Definition of Terms

Deaf/Deafness

The condition of being deaf, as referred to in this study, is as follows: "Deaf people cannot hear and understand speech through the ear alone, with or without amplification."(Schein, 1989, p.5).

Pragmatics

Pragmatics refers to "the practical skill of using language in a social context" (Van Kleek, 1984, p.129). Pragmatic competence involves a number of skills, including topic initiation and elaboration, turn-taking, and the communicative function of utterances. In this study, one element of pragmatics - language function - was investigated in individual sentences. Therefore, in this thesis, the term "pragmatics" has a more specific meaning than is generally the case.

Language Function

A language function is the "underlying idea or thought" in a spoken or written utterance (Shuy, 1988, p.107). Examples of language functions identified in this study include: Reporting Personal Facts, Requesting, Responding, Teasing, and Apologizing. A comprehensiye list of the language functions coded in this study is provided in Appendix A.

Semantics

Semantics is defined as "the represented information or meaning in a message, within the utterance or series of utterances" (Wood, 1982, p.10). In this study, semantics at the sentence level referred to whether or not the researcher understood a student's meaning clearly and unambiguously.

Syntax

In this study, syntax referred to the grammatical correctness of the students' sentences.

Violation

Violations are inappropriate or incorrect uses of a linguistic element. In this study, pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic violations were identified.

Congruency

This term was used to characterize sentences in which language function, clarity of meaning, and grammatical correctness were all intact.

Expressive Language

This term was used to characterize non-graphic modes of communication, specifically speech and sign, in order to differentiate them from the written mode.

Outline

A review of the literature is presented in Chapter II, which presents the case that dialogue journals can be an effective means of promoting language growth in deaf children, and that linguistic analysis within this genre should include components of pragmatics, semantics, and syntax. In Chapter III, the procedures used in collecting the data are

described, and qualitative and quantitative approaches to the data are presented. Results of the analyses are discussed in Chapter IV, with respect to individual dyads, the students' group performance, and the teacher's performance across students. In Chapter V, the results are integrated into the body of research on deaf children's writing and dialogue journals. Issues addressed in this chapter include: grammaticality versus communicative competence, passive and assertive conversational styles, sentence level versus discourse level analyses, deaf students' syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic competence, and how teachers use dialogue journals. Suggestions for further research are integrated into the discussion. Finally, limitations of this research are presented. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusion.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a case for researching dialogue journals as a method for enhancing English literacy - in particular, writing skill - in deaf students. Support for this proposition is based on three theoretical views:
(1) that different language modes - whether spoken, signed or written - are related;
(2) that methods used in studying expressive modes (speech and sign) may be applied to the written mode;
(3) that a natural language approach may be applied to literacy development.
Pertinent areas surveyed include: the link between spoken and written conversation; deaf children's early linguistic experiences at home and at school, and their relation to later literacy development; writing problems of deaf children; and dialogue journal research with hearing and deaf students. The chapter ends with a rationale for this study: investigating pragmatic, semantic and syntactic patterns in the sentences of three deaf students' written conversation.

Link Between Spoken and Written Language

Teaching a majority of deaf children to be functionally literate is a challenge that continues to confound educators

of the deaf. In their ongoing efforts to improve this situation, researchers and educators are looking to the work of interactionists such as Vygotsky and Bruner. These theorists were among the first to propose that language emerged in social play between infants and caregivers. The impact for literacy theory is the view that all language modes - speaking, signing, reading and writing - are socially based and that conversation is an important foundation for the development of literacy (Wood, Wood, Griffiths & Howarth, 1986).

In the past, difficulties with written language were treated quite separately from those of spoken language. The differences between spoken and written language have been exaggerated by methodology:

> they are largely the product of comparing formal writing with informal speech. These differences are considerably less obvious when one compares formal speech to formal writing. There have been no studies comparing informal writing to informal speech (Shuy, 1988, p.77).

Increasingly, language researchers and practitioners acknowledge that spoken and written language are <u>distinct yet related</u> linguistic forms (Rubin, 1987). Peyton (1988) agrees with the position that "the key feature differentiating spoken and written language is not...the

mode of expression (speaking or writing) but rather the presence or absence of an audience and the degree of negotiation and involvement with the audience that occurs" (p.89). Within this orientation, speech and writing represent stages of development along a continuum of linguistic expression. Drawing from this approach, writing as a mode of communication has been compared to speech, with "literary events" treated as analogous to "speech events" (Heath, 1984, cited in Maxwell, 1985).

Accordingly, approaches to the study and teaching/remediation of expressive language are being applied to the written mode. A study by Johnson and Barton (1988) exemplifies such an approach with respect to deaf students. These researchers applied the idea of the communicative function of utterances to the written word. They coded deaf students' printed TDD dialogues using a system originally developed for analyzing conversational patterns in hearing speakers. The focus of the study was to identify communication behaviors of deaf students conversing in print with a hearing adult which served to establish and maintain topics of conversation. In a similar vein, analysis of deaf students' conversational writing in the present study was based on the content, form and use model of spoken language developed by Bloom & Lahey (1978).

Early Linguistic Experiences: Implications for Literacy

Literacy problems of deaf children begin with their typically impoverished linguistic experiences as infants and young children. The majority of deaf children, born to hearing parents, encounter disrupted patterns of interpersonal communication resulting both from the nature of deaf - hearing interaction itself, and common parental responses to the discovery of deafness in their child.

For hearing mothers with deaf babies, sound is a difficult medium in which to achieve mutual understanding. Unlike mothers of hearing babies, they cannot effectively use speech to establish and maintain a common focus on an object or event (Wood et al., 1986). Yet these states of joint attention are crucial for language acquisition (Bruner, 1977): mothers talk about what they and their babies jointly see, hear and do, thereby translating experience into language. This process, referred to as "scaffolding", is how hearing infants come to acquire a native language and the cultural conventions of communication.

Parents of deaf children are unable to establish turn-taking and reciprocity to the same degree as parents of hearing children; as a result, they become more controlling, frequently directing the child's attention to what they (the adults) are doing, rather than the other way around (Wood et

al., 1986). Thus, deaf children's earliest linguistic experiences are different both in quantity and quality than their hearing counterparts. The implications of this resonate along all points of the language development continuum, including reading and writing. Here is where dialogue journal communication can be of significant benefit: conversational participation and control are much more balanced between adult and child, thus affording the deaf student greater freedom and opportunity for linguistic expression.

Teaching Style: Implications for Literacy

Controlling interactive styles do not end with parents of deaf infants. Preschool and school teachers have also been shown to use more controlling styles with deaf children, including increased use of questions, repairs and interruptions (Wood et al., 1986). Wood and colleagues labelled this discourse style "teacher talk" and it may have significant consequences for language learning by deaf children. These researchers demonstrated that students of teachers who learned to use a less controlling, more contingent classroom conversational style took more frequent and longer turns in the discourse. It may be that teachers and other language interventionists who use a controlling interactional style (teacher talk) unwittingly play a role in shaping a passive conversational style in deaf students

that is counterproductive to the development of communicative competence (Geoffrion, 1982) and, by extension, to the development of competence in reading and writing. In a study of telecommunication conversations of deaf high school students, Geoffrion found that those with low proficiency in English used a more passive style than did peers with high English proficiency. That is, the low proficiency group were less active in determining the topic of conversation, used less words per message, and asked fewer questions. "The low ability students become trapped in a self-perpetuating cycle whereby low proficiency leads to a passive approach to conversation and less practice for these students" (Geoffrion, 1982, p.106). In effect, this researcher found the same kind of passivity in deaf children's typewritten conversations that Wood et al. observed in face to face classroom encounters. By limiting the opportunities of deaf children to take an active role in discourse, educators may contribute to stifled linguistic development in all modes.

Literacy Problems of Deaf Children

The result of decreased exposure to and use of a variety of discourse styles is that deaf children's linguistic base is often not well enough developed for the demanding tasks of learning to read and write. Typically, their verbal concepts are less developed, they are less familiar with sentence and

discourse patterns, and they probably have not acquired the metalinguistic ability to think of language as an abstract system (Quigley & Paul, 1984). These skills affect written as well as spoken modes: "[children's] relative success at print literacy depends to a large extent on their ability to understand and manipulate different forms of spoken and written language" (Wallach & Miller, 1988, p.84). Learning to read then becomes "a matter of discovering the characteristics of a language already known" (Webster, 1986, p.151).

It seems likely that for deaf children, learning to read and write involves different processes than those used by hearing children. Approaches to reading and writing instruction are based on theories of "inner language coding" (1); that is, whether deaf children encode text auditorally, visually, or by a combination of both. Good hearing readers, as well as some good deaf readers, have developed an inner speech code; that is, an auditory awareness of grapheme-phoneme correspondence that allows them to decode print into auditory units. This so-called "bottom-up" skill has been the foundation of many an approach to teaching reading, with both hearing and deaf children. But some (e.g. Webster, 1986) question whether inner speech is a cause or consequence of learning to read, and whether the focus of instruction should be on a central weakness in the child's

learning apparatus. Webster questions whether the lack of an inner speech code in many deaf children can account for their difficulties in understanding text. Instead, he argues for helping them use "top down" strategies for understanding text: using general knowledge and contextual cues to generate hypotheses about meaning. Deaf children, he asserts, continue to progress in their reading development, albeit at a slow pace. What is needed are textual materials and teaching strategies that take into account deaf children's incomplete mastery of a native language, their relative unfamiliarity with English structure, and their reduced exposure to a variety of discourse styles, such as conversation, story telling, jokes and monologues. Dialogue journals fit Webster's criteria: communication is tailored to individual needs; the structure of English is manifest unambiguously via the visual mode; and they incorporate a much larger range of language functions than conventional school writing (Shuy, 1988).

With respect to deaf children's written language, "there are notable delays and substantial differences in the development of written language forms....Deaf children tend to use greater numbers of basic syntactic structures, including the nouns, verbs, and determiners, and demonstrate less frequent use of adverbs, auxiliaries and conjunctions than hearing children." (McAnally, Rose & Quigley, 1987,

p.190). While a number of factors undoubtedly contribute to the literacy problems of deaf children, the pragmatic component is key:

> the child's experience of language in use does not prepare her adequately for the structures that appear in writing....If the child had only limited exposure to function words, embedded sentences, and complex syntax in spoken discourse, then she will be less well prepared to recognize and use these features in written language....the problems of sustaining dialogue and enjoying complex linguistic interactions with deaf children in conversation constrains the range of usage to which the deaf child puts written language (Webster, 1986, p.188-189).

Dialogue Journals and Literacy

Dialogue journals manifest the link between expressive and written language modes:

> dialogue writing...incorporates both the interactive aspects of oral, face-to-face communication and the solitary, self-directed aspects of essayist writing. As a result, dialogue writing can bridge the gap between the two forms of communication and provide a natural means by which children can be helped to move from a skill they already know ...to a new skill.(Kreeft-Peyton, 1988, p.88).

As a teaching tool, dialogue journals are a practical application of a natural language approach to literacy. Four principles of such an approach to language learning are:

> (1) language involves interactions among the components content, form and use; (2) information about normal language development is the basis for determining language goals and intervention strategies; (3) language is learned through communication; (4) communicative competence is the ultimate goal of language development (McAnally, Rose & Quigley, 1987, p.82).

These principles are manifest in the present study. Principle (1) provided the foundation for the data analysis. Principle (2) is exemplified in the simple, adaptable method used to measure changes in a student's pragmatics, semantics, and syntax at the sentence level. The resulting information could be used as a basis for individualized instruction of identified weaknesses. Principle (3) is demonstrated by the changes that occurred in the students' written dialogue in the absence of explicit instruction. Finally, the study incorporates Principle (4) by showing how each linguistic component - pragmatics, semantics and syntax - contributed to the students' communicative competence within this genre.

How Dialogue Journals Work

"Dialogue journals are interactive, written conversations carried on by student and teacher frequently and continuously over an extended period of time" (Staton, 1985, p.128). The primary function of dialogue journals is communication rather than teaching per se. They are read for meaning, not grammatical accuracy. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are not corrected directly. However, if a student's meaning is unclear because of one or more of these structural elements, the teacher, in her written entry, may ask for clarification. Teaching occurs in the act of communication, in the encouragement of self-expression, reflection and critical thought.

Dialogues between student and teacher are written in a bound journal. Students take an active role in determining topics of conversation. Herein lies one of the keys to success of these journals: students are able to talk about things that are of real interest to them. They write an entry each day, to which the teacher responds. The written communication is inherently meaningful to and functional for the student, components that have been noticeably lacking in traditional reading and writing lessons (McAnally, Rose, & Quigley, 1987; Staton, 1984). The problem of decontextualized language which often poses a problem for deaf students is also minimized - "dialogue journals are much more like face-to-face conversation" (Staton, 1985, p.132). And as in a

face-to- face conversation, one partner cannot sustain a topic without the interest and thus the participation of the other. Therefore, dialogue journals are more egalitarian than other forms of teacher-student interaction (Staton, 1988). Being conversational, the journal writing can be used to express many communicative functions - expressing opinions, asking questions, apologizing, complaining, persuading, and so on - that are not a part of school-based writing. Because dialogue journals are an instructional technique rather than a curriculum, goals for each student are easily personalized.

Dialogue Journals and Literacy Teaching

Staton (1985) criticizes traditional methods of teaching writing to deaf children which parallel those used with hearing children. She notes two underlying assumptions of typical writing instruction: (1) that oral language must be acquired prior to written language; (2) that writing is learned in graduated increments over several years. "As a result, hearing-impaired students may spend many frustrating years of learning to make speech sounds before serious reading and writing can begin" (Staton, 1985, pp.127-128).

Similarly, Webster (1986) and Wood et al. (1986) criticize traditional reading programs that for deaf students become lessons in language and speech (e.g. vocabulary and

pronunciation). This has led these authors to caution against using reading to teach language. Given that their scope of reference is reading programs developed for normally hearing students, their cautions are well advised. But with dialogue journals, literacy teaching is incidental rather than applied. The reasoning is that deaf students may learn literacy through written dialogue in much the same way as children learn their first language through social interaction. That is, dialogue journals may accomplish via the visual mode some of the same kinds of interactional scaffolding that occur with young children acquiring language via the oral/aural mode. As with first language acquisition, the child's cognitive system is stimulated:

> Learning to think, like learning to write, occurs not by rote methods but by giving learners opportunities to participate in meaningful collaboration with someone experienced in reflecting on events. These intentional, personally meaningful written conversations are opportunities for hearing impaired students to acquire knowledge and cognitive processes that cannot be taught but can be acquired over time through observation and interaction (Staton, 1985, p.146).

Dialogue Journal Research With Deaf Children

The Dialogue Journal Project at Gallaudet University was carried out from 1982-1985 in order to investigate this

method of teaching reading and writing to deaf children (Staton, 1985). Dialogue journals from students of various ages - kindergarten through college - were analyzed. Dialogue journal use was found to have a number of positive effects on the students' education: enhanced reading and writing, improved student motivation and student - teacher rapport, and acquisition of higher level thinking skills. However, because of the personal, individual nature of each journal, specific benefits are not predictable: "the outcomes of these sustained written conversations are as diverse as the students and teachers involved" (Staton, 1985, p.151).

Nevertheless, the results challenge the assumption that oral language competency is a necessary prerequisite to the development of literacy in young deaf children:

> young hearing impaired children, if given sufficient contextualized written input and the opportunity to use written language naturally, will 'break into print' even without the extensive oral language competence normal-hearing children bring to written language (Staton, 1985, p.144).

Dialogue Journals: Research Implications

As Paul & Quigley (1990) note, most of the research into deaf children's writing has focused on the outcome (that is, the errors) rather than the processes involved in

composition. This is beginning to change. Deaf children's language (including their written language) is increasingly considered to be delayed rather than deviant (Webster, 1986). With this shift in perspective, researchers are increasingly focusing on the processes involved in writing: planning, composing and revising, with a focus on meaning in addition to syntax (Paul & Quigley, 1990). Dialogue journals offer the opportunity to investigate the three components of language - pragmatics, semantics and syntax - in deaf children's writing, in much the same manner as these have been studied in expressive modes (e.g. Schirmer, 1985). Moreover, they are a valuable source of information on spontaneously generated writing processes, such as revision.

Much of the current study of both spoken and written dialogue assigns the pragmatic component of language a dominant role over semantics and syntax. As Beattie (1990) documents, many contemporary linguists consider pragmatics to be "the overall organizing component of language and it is only when a need to communicate exists that the rules of syntax, morphology, phonology and semantics are employed to address this need." (1990, p.2). In this view, the cornerstone of language ability is <u>communicative competence</u>: knowing "how to interact, how to communicate with one another appropriately in various situations, and how to make

sense of what others say and do in communication situations" (Lindfors, 1987, p.277). The notion of communicative competence has led researchers to identify underlying communication intentions or functions of individual utterances.

In a similar vein, Shuy (1988) applied the notion of communicative intent to the written mode. This was part of the first comprehensive study of dialogue journals. The dialogue journals from a class of 26 hearing sixth graders were analyzed (Staton, Shuy, Kreeft-Peyton & Reed, 1988). Shuy coded the students' and teacher's sentences according to the kind of communication purpose that each sentence accomplished; for example, telling something, asking a question, thanking, offering, etc. These were labelled "language functions". Ten students' dialogue journals were selected from the 26 for this analysis. For each dialogue journal, two 2-week sampling frames were selected: one from the Fall and one from the Spring. A coding scheme consisting of 15 functions was developed and frequency of occurrence was tabulated for each function. The sentence data were then analyzed according to the range of language functions used, changes in the use of those functions, and the profile of language use by each student.

To date, a similar coding of language functions in deaf

students' dialogue journals has not been undertaken. Yet it is well established that deaf children's writing is qualitatively and systematically different from that of hearing children (Webster, 1986, Kretschmer & Kretschmer, 1978). Kretschmer & Kretschmer (1978) have identified a series of semantic, syntactic and pragmatic rule violations commonly found in the writing of deaf children. Webster (1986) provides evidence that deaf children approach the task of writing with a different set of assumptions as to how language works. For example, they tend to interpret all sentence types as if they followed a Subject-Verb-Object pattern, e.g. "Mary hit the ball." While this basic sentence type is common in English, deaf children often apply it to more complex constructions such as the passive voice, e.g. "The ball was hit by Mary." Using the S-V-O rule, this sentence would be interpreted to mean that the ball hit Mary.

Given that analyses of deaf children's expository writing yields consistent and striking differences from that of hearing children, one would expect their written dialogues to also have a different range and profile of language functions than hearing children. Moreover, it has been suggested that some of the differences between deaf and hearing students may be due to cultural differences in the way that deaf and hearing people communicate (McGinnis,

1983). Therefore, differences in the pragmatics of hearing and deaf students' dialogue journals may stem from two sources: 1) strikingly different levels of English language proficiency; and 2) differences in habitual communication practices between deaf and hearing cultures.

Dialogue journal research is recent, dating from the early 1980's. Their use in the classroom is not yet widespread. Yet dialogue journals hold considerable promise for research and classroom teaching. For students of language and literacy, dialogue journal research may help clarify the connection between spoken (or signed) and written English, how deaf students acquire literacy, and how dialogue journals function as tools for literacy education. While deaf children's difficulties with print are multi-faceted, and no single method or tool can provide all the answers, the use of dialogue journals framework warrants further application and study in educational settings.

Endnote

1. The term "inner language coding", as it applies to theories of deaf children's reading and writing processes, is distinguished from cognitive psychologists' use of the term "inner speech" or "inner language", which refers to "the inner use of language in thought" (John-Steiner & Tatter, 1983, p.92).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes procedures used in collecting and analyzing writing samples from three deaf students' dialogue journals. The design of the study is primarily qualitative, although quantitative measures are also incorporated. Descriptive feacures of the design include: a) a small number of participants (three students and one teacher), b) data obtained in a naturalistic manner (participants did not know at the time of writing that their dialogues would be the subject of research), c) the data obtained span a considerable length of time (one school year). The data are analyzed with respect to pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic elements, using both descriptive and quantitative methods. Because of the descriptive nature of the study, the results are not generalizable to a larger population of deaf students; however, it is hoped that this exploratory work will furnish research questions which will provide direction for further dialogue journal research.

Participants

At the end of the school year in which the dialogue journals were written, the teacher of a class of eight grade nine deaf students at a public Junior High school in a Canadian city discussed dialogue journal research with her class and

presented a brief written request for participation in this study to each student (see Appendix B). Three students - two males and one female - agreed to let their dialogue journals be used for this project. All the research participants (excluding the teacher) were deafened prelingually. One subject used American Sign Language (ASL) as his preferred mode of communication; the other two students used a combination of speech and manual English. One student had a general language deficit in all communication modes (speech/sign and writing). The students' ages were from 14 to 16 years.

In the classroom, some form of signing (the student's choice) was required at all times. Speech was used optionally. The teacher, a fluent signer with interpreter-level skills, regularly used simultaneous communication (speech and Pidgin Signed English) during the lesson. However, she frequently accommodated the diverse language needs of her students by switching into other modes (ASL only or simultaneous communication with a lower language level and more emphasis on speech) to aid comprehension. For part of the day, the students were mainstreamed into regular classes with an interpreter.

Data

The data consist of two samples taken from the classroom

dialogue journals of each of the three students. The dialogue journals contain handwritten conversations between each student and his or her teacher between September 1989 and June 1990. The entire dialogue journals were made available to the researcher, who subsequently chose a Fall sample and a Spring sample from each dialogue journal for sentence level analysis of the three components of language - pragmatics, semantics, and syntax. In each case, the Fall samples consist of the first two October entries written by the student and the teacher. The Spring samples were chosen on the basis of a particular topic - the decision as to which high school each student would attend the following year. Depending on when this topic came up with each dyad, the timing of the Spring samples ranged from the last week of March, 1990 through the first two weeks of April, 1990. Therefore, there was a spread of approximately six months between the two sampling frames.

In order to protect the confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms were chosen by the researcher. Names of other people and places mentioned in the journals were eliminated and replaced with brackets and dashes [---] for names of people, and brackets and letters [X or Y] for names of places.

Analysis

The data analysis was based on Bloom's and Lahey's (1978) model of the three components of spoken language: content (semantics or meaning), form (syntax or structure) and use (language function or pragmatics). Within this framework, two specific tasks were undertaken: 1) to adapt a system for coding sentence level language functions in the dialogue journals of a class of hearing sixth graders (Shuy, 1988); and 2) to analyze each of the students' sentences for congruence among three main components of language: pragmatics, semantics and syntax.

First, each of the students' and teacher's sentences was coded according to its pragmatic language function or communicative intent. In those cases where sentence punctuation was lacking, the researcher imposed sentence boundaries. The decision as to where to place these boundaries was based on semantic and syntactic criteria: 1) words which comprised a individual unit of meaning; and/or 2) structural cues such as commas and "connector" words - "but", "so", "and".

Language Functions

A total of 20 different language functions was identified (see Appendix A). Fourteen of the language functions identified were based on Shuy's (1988) coding of sentence

level language functions in the dialogue journals of 10 hearing sixth graders: Reporting Personal Facts, Reporting General Facts, Predicting, Reporting Opinions, Evaluating, Giving Directives, Requesting, Responding, Opening, Closing, Denying, Apologizing, Promising, and Offering. For several of the language functions, Shuy's definitions were used without modification: Reporting Personal Facts, Reporting General Facts, Predicting, Giving Directives, Responding, Opening, Closing, Apologizing, Promising, and Offering. However, adaptations to his system were necessary on four counts. Firstly, Shuy eliminated those functions which occurred very infrequently in his data. Because of the smaller sample size in the present study (both smaller number of students and smaller quantity of writing), each language function, regardless of frequency of occurrence, was included. Secondly, two of Shuy's definitions - Reporting Opinions and Evaluating - were not sufficiently detailed to be applied with consistency in this study. Therefore, the researcher generated her own definitions for these functions. Thirdly, Shuy delineated separate categories for different types of requests (e.g. information, procedure, opinion). In the present study, these categories were not found to be useful in differentiating broader pragmatic functions of questions: those for purposes of conversation, and those for purposes of teaching. Therefore, all types of requests, whether in

question form or not, were labelled Requesting. The issue of conversational versus teaching questions was addressed in the descriptive analysis. Fourthly, certain functions either did not occur, or were not coded separately in Shuy's data: Reiterating, Using Performatives, Confirming, Asking Rhetorical Questions, Teasing, and Praising.

For each dialogue journal partner, four tallies were made regarding use of individual functions for both the Fall and Spring samples: 1) total number of functions; 2) frequency of occurrence of each language function; 3) number of language function categories used; and 4) number and frequency of sentences expressing more than one function.

Function Clusters

To obtain a more cohesive view of language use, individual functions were then clustered into five main categories: Reporting, Affective, Social-Conversational, Responsive, and Requestive. The Reporting functions are those that tell about events in the past, present or future, whether they relate personally to the writer or not: Personal Facts, General Facts and Predictions. Affective functions are comprised of Opinions and Evaluations, in which the writer reports his or her feelings about or reactions to something. Social-Conversational functions are those that are the least likely to occur in other types of school-based writing. They

give the text its unique speech-like quality and comprise the largest number of individual functions: Using Performatives, Opening, Closing, Confirming, Denying, Apologizing, Asking Rhetorical Questions, Offering, Promising, Praising and Teasing. Requestive functions comprise a variety of question forms ("Wh", "yes/no", "tag"), but also include statements that serve to elicit a response from the dialogue partner. The function "Giving Directives" was also included in the Requestive cluster, since these often took the form of a request and invariably functioned to solicit some action by the dialogue partner. Finally, Responsive functions - Responding and Reiterating - relate to topic continuation and turn-taking. Together, these function clusters reveal each individual's personality and pragmatic writing style. Frequency of occurrence for each of the function clusters was calculated for each dialogue partner. The teacher's frequency of use for each function cluster across all students was also calculated.

Congruency Among Language Components

Next, the students' sentences were analyzed for linguistic congruence: that is, pragmatics, semantics and syntax all intact. Since the teacher was assumed to be competent with respect to linguistic congruence, her writing was not included in this portion of the analysis. For each sentence, three tallies were made: one for each of the three

components of language. For the pragmatic component, a positive tally was made if the language function (e.g. reporting an opinion, making a request, apologizing) was identifiable. For the semantic component, a positive tally was made if the student's meaning was clear and unambiguous, regardless of whether or not the sentence was grammatically correct. (In a few cases, a sentence could be interpreted in more than one way, each with a slightly different meaning. In such cases a semantic violation was counted). For the syntactic component, a positive tally was made if the sentence conformed to the conventions of spoken English. Grammatical errors, or words and phrases used in an uncharacteristic way, were counted as syntactic violations. Sentence units in which pragmatics, semantics and syntax were all appropriate were labelled "congruent". Those sentence units in which language function, meaning and syntactic form were all obscure were labelled as "communication breakdowns".

Syntactic Violations

Finally, the students' syntactic violations were analyzed in more detail. However, since this kind of analysis depended on having a clear understanding of what the writer was attempting to convey, only those sentences which were semantically intact were analyzed for syntactic errors. In judging such errors, the standard employed was

conversational, spoken English. The researcher used her native speaker competence in judging deviations from standard colloquial forms.

Five types of syntactic violations were identified: omissions, word form errors, word order errors, use errors, and meaning errors. An omission was counted when either a word or phrase was left out.

e.g. "for my plan career, maybe [I'll] be an Actor."

"I hope [the] Blue Jays win this afternoon."

A word form error was counted whenever an incorrect form of the word was used. Word form errors often, but not always, consisted of verb tenses used inappropriately.

e.g. "I miss my show last night."

"I don't feel comfort with it."

Word order errors consisted of reversals and other misplaced words. Some examples include:

"if you want to know who's Michelle Piffee, she also in'Wicked Witches'."

"I don't know what is the result."

"Please you will tell her to say hi from me."

Use errors occurred when the student chose an inappropriate word in a certain category (for example, the wrong preposition or verb), or when a word or phrase was inappropriately included in a sentence.

e.g. "I will play a softball school team this year for

one more year deal."

"A's and Blue Jays game get warm in Oakland."

"have a such nice long weekend."

"I really am fun on Friday."

Meaning errors occurred at the phrase level and were counted when a student expressed his or her meaning in a way that did not conform to common English usage. Noun - number errors were counted in this category.

e.g. "I have a pet - dogs, cat, birds."

"last couple a week ago or two weeks ago..."

"Batman movie are in VCR tapes right now but not movie store (Renting)."

Endnote

1. Throughout this thesis, where portions of the students' and teacher's text is quoted, spelling and punctuation used in the original is reproduced intact.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

In this chapter, three deaf students' dialogue journal writing is discussed with respect to sentence level analyses of pragmatics (language functions), semantics (clarity of meaning) and syntax (grammatical correctness). The teacher's use of language functions is also discussed. First, an overview of the students' performance as a group is presented for each of the language components analyzed. Next, similarities and differences in the teacher's pragmatic style with the three students is examined. Finally, the dialogues of each student-teacher dyad are considered individually.

1. Overview of Students' Results

Pragmatics

As a group, the students used a similar range of language functions as their teacher. A total of 21 language functions were identified in the entire corpus. Of these, 19 occurred in the students' writing. Two functions, Praising and Teasing, were used by the teacher but not by any of the students.

For the most part, all the participants talked about the same kinds of things - events that had happened, or were

about to happen, in their lives (Personal Facts and Predictions). This is not surprising, given the personal nature of the journals. As such, the Reporting functions - Personal Facts, General Facts and Predictions - dominated for all students and the teacher in both the Fall and the Spring (see Table 7).

Another trend that can be discerned across all students is an increase in Affect functions - Opinions and Evaluations. With two students, Laura and Bill, the increase in use of these functions was pronounced - 13% and 17% respectively. The third student, Scott, started with a relatively high percentage use of Affective functions and increased their use by 4%. This may reflect the teacher's didactic agenda of encouraging critical thinking and introspection in her students. Her purpose was articulated in an entry to Bill: "A dialogue journal means we talk about things that happen to us everyday, <u>what we are thinking, how we feel,</u> etc." (emphasis added)

With respect to Requestive functions (Requesting and Giving Directives), the students varied in how frequently they were used, from a low of 0 (Bill's Fall sample) to a high of 23% (Bill's Spring sample). Further pragmatic analysis revealed that questions were used for two different communicative intents. Frequently, they served to start or extend a

conversation. In most cases, responses to this type of question were not imperative; they simply opened the way for more conversation on a particular topic. Laura's and Scott's questions functioned as conversation starters a majority of the time, in both Fall and Spring. An example of one of these "conversational" questions from Laura's Fall sample illustrates: "so how was your day doing at home?" In contrast, Bill used information-seeking questions which implied a response: "How many Sr. high schools have deaf students (not oral? Are my class will plan high school resignation after next parent meeting?"

Table 7 shows similarities and differences in the students' individual use of the various function clusters. Laura and Scott were similar in their rank order use of the various function clusters: Reporting, Affect, and Social-Conversational functions were dominant. Moreover, both students' individual rank ordering was the same in the Spring as it was in the Fall. Scott showed the least change in his pattern of use of the function clusters. With the exception of Reporting functions, Bill presented quite a different pattern in his use of the various function clusters: a much lower frequency of Affect and Social-Conversational functions, and a much higher incidence of Responsive functions. Unlike his two peers, Bill's pragmatic profile in the Spring was quite different than in the Fall.

Semantics

All three students communicated their meaning clearly, if ungrammatically, in a majority of sentences. Laura's Fall sample had the highest rate (14%) of semantic violations (sentences in which the meaning was ambiguous), and Bill had no semantic violations in either of his samples. However, even for those sentences counted as "semantic violations", enough meaning was grasped for the teacher to continue the topic in her entry. A sample from Laura's journal illustrates:

> Laura: We have to celebrating to make birthday. to my brother [---] he almost 12 yrs old that pretty old - look to me.
>
> Jan: You have only a few more shopping days left until [---] turns 12. So, you think he is looking pretty old. Well, what does he look like?

Instances where meaning was totally obscure (communication breakdown) occurred in only Laura's sample, once in the Fall and once in the Spring. Both cases involved sentence fragments which were ancillary to a preceding statement and did not interrupt the general flow of meaning. In fact, the teacher did not question either case.

Interestingly, the student who had no instances of ambiguous meaning, Bill, also had the most conservative writing style: he used the least number of language function categories and

had the highest percentage of sentences expressing a single language function only. This suggests the possibility that clarity of meaning may sometimes be a consequence of syntactic or pragmatic simplicity, rather than of semantic mastery. That is, some students may avoid topics that necessitate a different style of writing or that require more complex syntax. While such a claim cannot be verified in this case, it is reasonable to suppose that some deaf children may avoid certain kinds of language expression that are unfamiliar because they do not want to "get it wrong."

Syntax

Syntactic violations abound in all three students' writing: in all samples, one or more grammatical violations occurred in over 50% of sentences. However, two students, Laura and Bill, showed considerable improvement from Fall to Spring in the percentage of sentences which were grammatically correct. Scott actually increased his rate of grammatical violation by 5%.

The kinds of syntactic violations that were most prevalent across all three students were: omissions, incorrect form (e.g "slept" instead of "sleep"), and inappropriate usage (e.g. incorrect placement of conjunctions). Again, while individual differences exist, verbs, prepositions and determiners caused the most difficulty.

The students' fluctuations in congruency (pragmatics, semantics and syntax all appropriate) was tied to their syntactic rating: Laura and Bill, whose rate of syntactic violation decreased, showed a corresponding increase in their rate of congruency. Similarly, Scott, whose rate of syntactic violation increased, had a corresponding decrease in his rate of congruency.

2. Overview of the Teacher's Writing: Pragmatics

The teacher, Jan, used a total of 19 language functions in her dialogue journal writing - the same number as were identified in the students' writing. The two functions she did not use, but which occurred in the student corpus, were Apologizing and Denying. Jan used a similar range of functions with each student (see Tables 1-L, 1-S, and 1-B) although her patterns of use of those functions varied with each individual.

Table 7 shows a composite profile of Jan's use of the various function clusters, while Table 8 documents differences in the use of these clusters with each student. With Laura and Scott, she expressed mainly Reporting functions, but with Bill, Social-Conversational functions (mainly Performatives) were used most frequently. With each student, Jan's Spring profile was different than her Fall profile. The most pronounced change in pragmatic style

occurred with Bill, while the least change occurred with Scott.

As Table 7 shows, the biggest change that occurred in Jan's writing was her use of Social-Conversational functions, which decreased overall by 10%. But again, the trend was not uniform across all students. With Scott, her level of Social-Conversational functions stayed virtually the same, while her frequency of these functions decreased markedly with Laura and Bill. This perhaps is another reflection of the change in her teaching agenda. In the Fall, her goal was to get the students used to a conversational writing style. She encouraged a speech-like register through her own frequent use of Performatives, such as "by the way", "wow", "yum yum". However, by the Spring, this kind of modelling was unnecessary: all three students were used to the dialogue journal style. While the tone of her writing remained chatty and informal, she emphasized a more serious topic with each student: which school s/he would choose to attend the following year.

Evidence of how the teacher used dialogue journals as a teaching tool was revealed in her use of Requests and Directives. Unlike her students, Jan asked a variety of both conversational and teaching questions. Her teaching questions were used to stimulate critical thinking in the

students, to check their knowledge of language and vocabulary, and to verify their understanding of what she had written (comprehension monitoring). A difference in the function of Jan's questions is evident in comparing her Fall and Spring samples across all three students. In the Fall, her questions were mostly conversational; starting new topics, or more frequently, extending topics previously established by the student: "So your brother had a birthday. What did you finally decide to buy him?" ; "So when does this World Series happen?" In the Spring, however, most of her questions served a didactic purpose: "You wrote that the interpreter is not good...It's good that you know this. Why isn't she great? ; "How do you feel about going to [X School]? How about [Y School?]"

Similarly, most of Jan's Directives were didactic: "Please write in paragraphs to separate your ideas."; "It's important for you to know what makes a good interpreter & what makes a poor interpreter. Tell me why she isn't good." While this kind of incidental teaching occurred throughout Jan's dialogue, for the most part she did not use questions and directives to control the conversations. Rather, her questions and directives were contingent on the students' meaning. When she told Laura and Scott to use paragraphs in their journal writing, it was for the sake of clear understanding, rather than grammatical accuracy.

3. Dyad Profiles

A. Laura and Teacher

Pragmatics

Although Laura had the most trouble with the structure of written English, her performance on the sentence level pragmatic analysis in this study was comparable to her peers'. She demonstrated a greater range of language functions than Bill, whose command of written English was the most accurate. (However, at the discourse level, her control of pragmatic elements such as topic elaboration and cohesion was notably weaker than her that of her peers).

One of Laura's pragmatic strengths was the variety and consistency with which she began and ended her dialogue "turns". Unlike the hearing students in the Staton study (Staton et al., 1988), these deaf students and their teacher used a letter format to open and close their entries. Laura's Opening and Closing functions accounted for most of her Social-Conversational functions. One of the teacher's most common Social-Conversational functions in the Fall - Performatives - did not occur even once in her Spring sample with Laura (though she continued to use Performatives in her Spring samples with the other students). Laura did not use Performatives in either her Fall or Spring sample. Of course, it is entirely possible that Jan consciously changed elements of her writing style with Laura - if so, this would

be an example of contingency on Jan's part. It is also possible that Jan's decrease in the use of Performatives in the Spring reflects the more serious topic of choosing which high school to attend the following year.

Another feature of Laura's pragmatic profile was her use of questions. In Laura's Fall and Spring samples, Requesting was one of her most commonly used functions (see Table 3-L). With Laura and Jan, the usual pattern of teacher questions and student responses was reversed. The communicative function of most of Laura's requests was conversational. Laura frequently asked "How are you" (coded, in this analysis, as Request for Evaluation) at or near the beginning of her entry. It was clear from the context that she used this question as a greeting, a kind of conversation starter. A response was obviously not expected. The relatively high frequency of conversational questions in Laura's Fall and Spring samples showed her initiative and assertiveness as a conversational partner.

In her written dialogues, Laura was not as responsive as she was assertive. She did not, as Scott did, bring up any topic that the teacher previously initiated. This could partly be an artifact of the relatively small dialogue sample: in the Fall, the teacher asked Laura only one conversational - type

question. But in the Spring, when she asked pointed questions about choosing which school to attend the following year, Laura did not respond to all of the teacher's questions. Those responses she did provide appeared reluctantly, in a postscript. In their conversations, Jan continued topics that Laura brought up, but Laura continued a topic of Jan's only when prodded. Therefore, Jan carried most of the responsibility for keeping the dialogue going.

Semantics

Laura's ability to express meaning clearly - her control of semantics - was a function of structural elements such as syntax, punctuation and contextual support. In the Fall her dialogue was like a stream-of-consciousness with few structural markings - such as punctuation, capitalization, indentation - to separate topics, paragraphs, or even individual sentences. This lack of structural organization made it difficult to follow her flow of meaning (see Appendix C).

An example of how syntactic errors resulted in semantic breakdown is illustrated in the following sequence from Laura's Oct.6 entry:

> so today is Sat my mom put special kind to put your hair and changes the color - to make look nice. Today

is Monday we celebrated my brother birthday - because this Wed was cancelled to celebrated my brother who is now 12 year old.

Part of the confusion here is the inconsistency in coding time (today, this Wed) with the proper verb tense. Sometimes, however, contextual support made up for the confusion created by inappropriate verb tenses, as in the following sequence from Laura's Spring sample: "I can't wait until June of the end of school year I gone to somewhere I go with my Aunt on the vacation." Despite the lack of sentence punctuation and incorrect forms of the verb "to go", it is understood that Laura is looking forward to a vacation with her aunt when school is over.

As Table 4-L shows, Laura's control of semantics improved as her control of structural elements improved. It is noteworthy that her meaning remained virtually intact, given the number of syntactic errors that dominated her writing. Clearly, a lack of understanding as to the structure and format of written English need not be a barrier to meaningful, practical, enjoyable writing. While any evaluation of semantics is somewhat subjective, (for example, this researcher had less contextual support than her dialogue partner), it is nonetheless clear that meaning often remains intact despite muddled syntax.

Syntax

One reason that meaning in this sample remained intact was that many of Laura's syntactic violations consisted of words and phrases used in a way that is uncharacteristic in spoken or written English but are nevertheless semantically clear. Examples from Laura's writing include: "my quiz about science" [my science quiz]; "that pretty old - look to me" [that seems pretty old to me]. At first, some of these violations appeared to be influenced by sign language; for example, using the phrase "all night-day" to mean "sleeping in". However, the teacher reported that of the three students in this study, Laura used the least amount of sign. She preferred a combination of speech and Pidgin Signed English (PSE) to communicate. The teacher also stated that this student had a lower language level than her two peers and had difficulty with comprehension monitoring. Therefore, some of the uncharacteristic words and phrases in her writing may have been due to a general language deficit rather than interference from a different language mode.

In her Spring sample, the proportion of Laura's syntactic violations decreased 20% (see Table 4-L). Put another way, the proportion of sentences that conformed to standard English improved from 16% to 36%. This improvement was also reflected in her overall congruency level, which increased from 11% to 36% between Fall and Spring. On closer

examination, this result appeared to reflect a greater number of simple sentences, rather than an improved ability to render complex sentences grammatically. Many of the simple sentences in Laura's Spring sample were conventions of dialogue, e.g. "Hello there"; "How are you?", How was your weekend?". The average number of errors per sentence remained similar between Fall and Spring (1.4 vs. 1.3). So, it appeared that Laura made roughly the same proportion of errors on complex sentences in the Spring as in the Fall. It may be that the six month period between sampling frames was inadequate for improvement to be apparent. Also, because of its informal nature, this dialogue journal may not reflect Laura's best writing.

Looking at those sentences where syntactic violations occurred, omissions, use violations and word form errors accounted for the greatest proportion of errors (see Table 5-L). Comparing syntactic violations between Fall and Spring, there was a decrease in the proportion of meaning violations, and an increase in the proportion of use violations. This difference suggests that while Laura's overall rate of errors did not improve, some of the errors that she made in the Spring were less serious - less critical to her flow of meaning. This is because use violations at the word level consisted of a single inappropriate word choice, e.g. "in" instead of "to",

whereas meaning violations involved a phrase, e.g. "That my good time to ride on a taxi."

Looking at Laura's three largest error categories, Omissions, Word Form Errors, and Use Violations, the kinds of words that gave her the most trouble, collectively and by individual category, were verbs. This is one of the reasons her writing seems less grammatical and is harder to follow than that of her peers. Verbs carry much more critical information content, than, say, determiners, which is the category with which Bill had the most trouble. But other structural elements such as punctuation, paragraph markings, and spelling also contributed to Laura's overall clarity. Laura's Spring sample is more readable because her sentence boundaries are better. Rather than having one continuous stream of words, as she did in the Fall, Laura started each new sentence on a new line in the Spring. While this is not strictly correct structurally, it does render her writing more readable, showing an improved ability to communicate clearly.

B. Scott and Teacher

Pragmatics

Pragmatically, Scott is the most sophisticated of the three students in this sample. He used several functions (Performatives, Teasing, Apologizing, Promising, Offering,

Denying) that did not appear in the samples of his peers. Not only did he use a greater variety of functions, he used many more multi-function sentences (see Tables 1-S, 1-L, and 1-B). While his grasp of syntax was not always solid enough to render these functions grammatically, his meaning was rarely ambiguous. His use of Performatives was notable for the informal, conversational tone they gave to his writing. As well, he used them appropriately to signal topic changes, or as "conversation fillers" to collect his thoughts.

Scott's personality came through in this journal. Occasional teasing or sarcastic comments reveal a sense of humour: "...you finally got my talk book, are you happy?"; "your turn! 2 & 1/2 pages IS EXPECTED". His use of unconventional openings ("Hey, SCARE Jan"; "Ho, cream and pink Jan") signalled the friendship he had with his teacher. But while these jocular greetings occasionally took the teacher aback ("To scare Jan? Hmmm... I'll have to think about that"), they were never disrespectful, and seemed appropriate in this context. This was subsequently confirmed by the teacher; in fact, in her ongoing use of dialogue journals in the classroom, she encourages her students to be creative and use a variety of different openings in their journals.

Scott demonstrated a greater sensitivity to his dialogue partner than either Laura or Bill. He was the only student

to refer to a previous conversation (not within the dialogue journal): "so it's nice to hear from you that you went to [X City] with Ms.[----]." And he anticipated Jan's reaction to profane language: "I know that you will wonder why I left blanks in words because I think you do mind the swearing."

Another feature of Scott's writing was his use of structural elements - capital letters, underlining, and exclamation marks - for emphasis - an indication that he treated the writing as a dialogue and has a sense of the prosody of speech.

Jan's dialogue with Scott differed from her conversations with the other two students in two respects. On one occasion, she slipped into a pidgin form of English when Scott had misinterpreted a comment made by Jan to a mutual acquaintance. In correcting his misunderstanding, Jan modified her grammar to make sure her meaning was unambiguous: "I not say to [---] I can pick one favorite student. Every student is so different. Every relationship with me is different". (emphasis added)

The other aspect that differentiated her writing was dialogue length. With Laura and Bill, her entry length was very close to theirs. With Scott, her length in the Fall was much longer than his, while in the Spring it was much

shorter (see Table 1-S). Closer analysis of the individual entries shows that in the Fall, only one of Jan's entries was much longer than Scott's. In this, she went to great lengths to clarify the previously mentioned misinterpreted comment, so her explanation took up most of the conversation. Similarly, in the Spring, only one of Jan's entries was much shorter than Scott's. In it, she was at her most didactic. She outlined a format for him to list the advantages and disadvantages of attending various schools, thereby giving him a technique to apply to other situations requiring critical thought.

Semantics

Generally, Scott expressed his meaning well. There were relatively few instances where his meaning was ambiguous, and no instances of communication breakdown. Interestingly, just over half of Scott's sentences that were semantically ambiguous were grammatically correct. Therefore, unlike Laura, his control of semantics was not related to his command of written English. The meaning problem occurred because of a lack of reference, for example, inappropriate use of deixis: "I wish that I could change Art to Typewriting or micro Computer with you, same as block 1 for girls. But I have discussed with Mr.[----] about it, he said that that will be done on Tuesday Oct 10th. I don't know what is the result". Sometimes, Scott used exclamations

(Performatives) that did not appear to refer to statements in the text: "anyway, I don't understand your writing, please try to write same as page 29 my favorite piece of writing! oooops!! Anyway, do you have fun at [X Ski Hill?]" In other cases, meaning was affected by a word's unorthodox use, leaving the reader to translate his probable intended meaning into a different syntax: "I loved me!" (Interpreted to mean, "I'm great!") Another semantic violation came from a misplaced sentence: I am lucky because I have very good ability to ski! I loved me! Ya don't, hahaha!! In a few cases, Scott did not have adequate grasp of syntax in order to express his meaning clearly: "But to find out, I will go there (Woolco) to see and find out after my trainee (lobby) at Mcdonalds." Even when Scott's meaning was confusing or puzzling, a probable meaning could usually be inferred.

Syntax

Like his peers, a majority of Scott's sentences violated the conventions of standard English. In fact, the proportion of sentences with syntactic problems actually increased, while his level of congruency (pragmatics, semantics and syntax in harmony with one another) decreased (see Table 4-S). One reason for this may be that his syntactical complexity increased. This is suggested by the proportion of sentences that express more than one function. Scott increased his use of multi-function sentences by 12% between Fall and Spring

(see Table 1-S). Viewed this way, these statistics could be interpreted as an indication of language growth. As Scott's expression became more sophisticated, it appeared to be less structurally proficient. Yet interestingly, his proportion of semantic violations stayed at a similar, relatively low level. So, in spite of increased syntactic complexity, Scott kept his meaning intact.

Like Laura and Bill, Scott's most common violation categories were omissions, word form errors and pragmatic violations. Verbs, prepositions, and determiners constituted the greatest number of errors (see Table 5-S). In fact, in the category, "word form errors", the proportion that were due to verb errors increased 18%. Again, it could be that the problems with verb form were caused by more complicated sentences.

C. Bill and Teacher

Pragmatics

Bill showed a marked difference in the language functions expressed in Fall and Spring. His Fall conversations were monologues rather than dialogues. An avid sports follower, he related scores, playing schedules and other factual data about professional hockey, baseball, and football (coded as Reporting General Facts):

Toronto won American League East Champion on

> Saturday. Blue Jays Won 4-3 over Blatimore on Saturday. They will play American West Champion Oakland. If Blue Jay win 4 games, Then they advance to World Series. Chicago and San Fransico will play National League final. If Chicago or San Fransico win 4 games, Then they advance to World Series.

Over half of his sentences in the Fall reported general facts - a substantially higher proportion than the other students and the teacher.

Another example of the essay style that Bill used in his early conversations was the way he opened his entries. While the other students used a conventional letter opening format (Dear ---), Bill prefaced his entries with a title (e.g. "Toronto Blue Jays Won 1989 American East Champion"; "Blue Jays Lost Last Night"). These were coded as the pragmatic function "Opening" in the sentence level coding, but were counted as pragmatic violations in the surface structure error analysis, because of the heading format - capital letters, centered spacing. A heading or title is not a recognized format for opening written communication.

In the Fall, Jan used a higher rate of Social-Conversational functions with Bill than with her other students. The majority of these were Performatives. It seemed as though Jan emphasized these informal, speech-like functions as an

antidote to Bill's essay style: "Oh No! Bad news! The Blue Jays lost! Aaaahhhh! Toooo bad!"

There was an interesting shift in Bill's and Jan's use of Request and Response function clusters. In the Fall, Jan had a comparatively high rate of requesting with Bill (see Table 8). Through her questions, she tried to engage Bill in a more personal dialogue. For example, she asked a few questions about the big league games that Bill reported, but then attempted to personalize the conversation more by asking Bill about his own involvement in sports: "Do you play on any baseball teams? If yes, what positions have you played in the past?" Although he dutifully answered Jan's questions, Bill's single sentence responses did not lead to further dialogue of a more personal nature. Yet the way he answered her questions was appropriate. First he reiterated the topic of her question (e.g. "You asked me about question that your last letter. You said Do you play on any baseball teams?") In fact, reiterating previous topics was one of Bill's most commonly used functions in the Fall, complimenting Jan's frequent questions. Bill used no Request functions in the Fall. However, in the Spring, the pattern was reversed: Bill's increase in Requesting was matched by an increase in Jan's Responsive functions. He took on more of an assertive role in the conversation, asking several information-seeking questions. Through his questions, it was

evident that he was thinking seriously about his educational options for the following year: "I wonder if [X School] aldready set a deaf program. Is it right? I heard that Mr.[---] will might teach deaf student in [X School]. I hope so. When is [X School] resiration (I don't know spell it) deadline for deaf students?"

By the Spring, Bill's writing was truly conversational. No longer did he open his entries with a title heading. His reporting of General Facts had disappeared completely, replaced by more Evaluations, Personal Facts, and Requests: "Dear Ms.[---] How are you? I am fine. I went to the church. I was sign in the music in the church. I am really nervous. [---] was interpreting for me. She is not good interpreter."

While Bill's pragmatic style became more personal and conversational, the tone of his dialogues, even in Spring, was less social than that of the other two students. He used less Social-Conversational functions, and overall, used a more restricted range of functions than the other two students. Several factors could account for this - personality, relationship with his teacher (or authority figures in general), lack of experience with this genre, small sample size. The teacher reported that Bill was a more private person than his peers and took time to get used to the dialogue journal format.

Semantics

Despite a number of syntactic violations (especially single word omissions), Bill's meaning was always clear. By far, Bill was the most consistent in his use of sentence punctuation and paragraphs. This made it much easier to follow his meaning. Unlike the other two students, sentence boundaries did not have to be imposed by the researcher for analysis.

While an absence of errors is generally taken to be a positive sign, an interesting question is raised: might some children restrict their pragmatic and semantic components to topics they know they can render grammatically? (One doesn't sense this with Bill's writing as he shifted to a more assertive conversational role, expressing new language functions).

Syntax

Bill's writing gave the best grammatical impression of the three students, yet his proportion of syntactic violations was comparable to his peers' (see Table 4-B). The difference was that the errors he did make were much less critical to the flow or integrity of the text. For example, the word group that gave him the most difficulty was "determiners", which do not carry the same information content as verbs or nouns. When Bill omitted a word, as he frequently did,

(especially in the Fall), it was most likely to be a single function word such as "the", rather than a content word such as a noun or verb. However, like his classmates, Bill had difficulty with verbs, often placing them incorrectly within a sentence or using an incorrect form. He also had difficulty with appropriate use of prepositions.

It was the difference in omissions versus use violations that posed the most notable shift in kinds of structural violations (see Table 5-B). Bill's rate of use violations (i.e. inappropriate use of words or phrases) doubled in the Spring as compared with the Fall sample, whereas his rate of omissions decreased by more than half. Most of the use violations that occurred in Spring involved prepositions, either chosen incorrectly (e.g. "in" instead of "at") or used superfluously (e.g. "I was sign in the music..."). The overall number of violations per sample size (sentences) changed little between Spring and Fall (42/31 vs. 38/34). One reason for this could be the nature of the language functions expressed. With a preponderance of general fact reporting in the Fall, Bill's syntactic style was straightforward: Subject-Verb-Object. With the change in pragmatic style to more questions, evaluations and predictions, his syntax became more varied, and more complicated:

"[---] told me that [---] told her that [X School] already

setted a deaf program" ; "Are my class will plan high school resignation after next parent meeting?"

TABLE 1-L
Sample Size: Sentences, Language Functions, Language Function Categories, and Multi-Function Sentences
Laura and Teacher

	Fall		Spring	
	L	T	L	T
Tot. Sent.	43	36	36	38
Tot. Lang. Func.	46	42	42	49
Lang. Func.Cat.	12	14	11	11
Multi-Func. Sent.	04	06	07	10

TABLE 2-L
Percentage of Language Functions Used
Laura and Teacher

Lang. Func. Cat.	Fall		Spring	
	L	T	L	T
Rep. Pers. Facts	39	19	22	28
Rep. Gen. Facts	2	0	0	4
Predicting	7	10	10	14
Rep.Opinions	7	7	19	10
Evaluating	13	19	12	14
Requesting	13	5	14	10
Giving Directives	2	5	0	6
Responding	0	2	5	4
Reiterating	2	5	2	2
Using Performatives	0	10	0	0
Opening	4	5	7	6
Closing	7	6	5	0
Confirming	2	5	2	2
Ask. Rhet. Quest.	0	0	2	0
Thanking	2	0	0	0
Offering	0	2	0	0
Total Categories	12	14	11	11

TABLE 3-L
Most Commonly Used Functions
Laura and Teacher

Fall		Spring	
L	T	L	T
Pers. Facts	Pers. Facts	Pers. Facts	Pers. Facts
Evaluations	Evaluations	Opinions	Evaluations
Requests	Predictions	Requests	Opinions
	Performatives	Evaluations	Requests

TABLE 4-L
Sentence Level Analysis of Pragmatics, Semantics and Syntax
Laura

	Fall	Spring
	Percent	Percent
All Congruent	11	36
Communication Breakdown	2	3
Pragmatic Violations	2	3
Semantic Violations	14	8
Syntactic Violations	84	64

TABLE 5-L
Word Level Analysis of Syntactic Violations - Laura

Violation Type	Fall		Spring	
	N	P	N	P
Omissions	21	33	16	33
Word Form	13	21	08	17
Word Order	02	03	0	0
Use	19	30	22	46
Meaning	08	13	02	04
(Unanalyzed)	(2)		(1)	
Total	63	100	48	100

TABLE 1-S
Sample Size: Sentences, Language Functions, Language Function Categories, and Multi-Function Sentences
Scott and Teacher

	Fall		Spring	
	S	T	S	T
Tot. Sent.	77	106	79	31
Tot. Lang. Func.	100	137	107	38
Lang. Func. Cat.	16	15	14	12
Multi-Func. Sent.	17	30	27	08

TABLE 2-S
Percentage of Language Functions Used
Scott and Teacher

Lang. Func. Cat.	Fall		Spring	
	S	T	S	T
Rep. Pers. Facts	23	30	30	11
Rep. Gen. Facts	22	4	8	0
Predicting	5	5	6	5
Rep. Opinions	7	4	1	7
Evaluating	9	23	19	33
Requesting	6	10	4	11
Giving Directives	0	2	5	11
Responding	2	2	2	0
Reiterating	2	2	1	3
Using Performatives	12	8	15	5
Opening	1	2	2	5
Closing	2	1	3	0
Confirming	2	2	0	3
Ask. Rhet. Quest.	0	2	3	3
Thanking	0	1	0	3
Offering	1	0	0	0
Teasing	0	2	0	0
Apologizing	2	0	1	0
Promising	1	0	0	0
Denying	3	0	0	0
Total Categories	16	15	14	12

TABLE 3-S
Most Commonly Used Functions
Scott and Teacher

Fall		Spring	
S	T	S	T
Pers. Facts	Pers. Facts	Pers. Facts	Evaluations
General Facts	Evaluations	Evaluations	Pers. Facts
Performatives	Requests	Performatives	Requests
	Performatives		Directives

TABLE 4-S
Sentence Level Analysis of Pragmatics, Semantics and Syntax
Scott

	Fall	Spring
	Percent	Percent
All Congruent	43	33
Communication Breakdown	0	0
Pragmatic Violations	1	3
Semantic Violations	8	8
Syntactic Violations	55	60

TABLE 5-S
Word Level Analysis of Syntactic Violations - Scott

Violation Type	Fall		Spring	
	N	P	N	P
Omissions	28	41	31	39
Word Form	18	27	30	38
Word Order	4	6	1	1
Use	15	22	14	18
Meaning	3	4	4	5
(Unanalyzed)	(3)		(2)	
Total	68	100	80	100

TABLE 1 - B
Sample Size: Sentences, Language Functions, Language Function Categories, and Multi-Function Sentences Bill and Teacher

	Fall		Spring	
	B	T	B	T
Tot. Sent.	31	35	34	31
Tot. Lang. Func.	37	44	35	40
Lang. Func. Cat.	7	12	7	12
Multi-Func. Sent.	04	08	01	07

TABLE 2 - B
Percentage of Language Functions Used Bill and Teacher

Lang. Func. Cat.	Fall		Spring	
	B	T	B	T
Rep. Pers. Facts	11	18	34	13
Rep. Gen. Facts	54	7	0	23
Predicting	8	2	11	8
Rep. Opinions	3	2	9	5
Evaluating	0	7	11	5
Requesting	0	24	23	10
Giving Directives	0	0	0	5
Responding	8	0	0	8
Reiterating	11	2	0	10
Using Performatives	0	27	0	5
Opening	5	5	9	3
Closing	0	2	3	3
Confirming	0	2	0	0
Teasing	0	2	0	0
Praising	0	0	0	1
Promising	0	0	0	1
Total Categories	7	12	7	12

TABLE 3-B
Most Commonly Used Functions
Bill and Teacher

Fall		Spring	
B	T	B	T
General Facts	Performatives	Pers. Facts	General Facts
Pers. Facts	Requests	Requests	Pers. Facts
Reiterations	Pers. Facts	Evaluations	Requests
		Predictions	Reiterations

TABLE 4-B
Sentence Level Analysis of Pragmatics, Semantics and Syntax
Bill

	Fall	Spring
	Percent	Percent
All Congruent	26	38
Communication Breakdown	0	0
Pragmatic Violations	7	0
Semantic Violations	0	0
Syntactic Violations	74	59

TABLE 5-B
Word Level Analysis of Surface Structure Violations - Bill

Violation Type	Fall		Spring	
	N	P	N	P
Omissions	26	62	10	26
Word Form	6	14	10	26
Word Order	1	2	0	0
Use	9	21	18	47
Meaning	0	0	0	0
(Unanalyzed)		(0)		(0)
Total	42	100	38	100

TABLE 6
Function Clusters

1. Reporting Functions:	Reporting Personal Facts Reporting General Facts Predicting
2. Affective Functions:	Reporting Opinions Evaluating
3. Requestive Functions:	Requesting Giving Directives
4. Responsive Functions:	Responding Reiterating
5. Social-Conversational Functions:	Using Performatives Opening Closing Confirming Denying Apologizing Rhetorical Questions Offering Promising Teasing Praising

TABLE 7
Percentage of Function Clusters Used
Laura, Scott, Bill and Teacher

	Fall				Spring			
	L	S	B	T	L	S	B	T
Reporting	48	50	73	34	32	44	45	35
Affective	20	16	3	23	31	20	20	25
Soc.- Conv.	15	24	5	24	16	24	12	14
Requestive	15	6	0	14	14	9	23	17
Responsive	2	4	19	5	7	3	0	9

TABLE 8
Teacher's Use of Function Clusters By Dialogue Partner

	Fall			Spring		
	L	S	B	L	S	B
Reporting	29	39	27	46	16	44
Affective	26	27	9	24	40	10
Soc.- Conv.	28	18	38	8	19	13
Requestive	10	12	24	16	22	15
Responsive	7	4	2	6	3	18

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, the results are discussed within the broader context of research into both deaf children's writing and dialogue journals. Limitations of the study are addressed. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusion.

Dialogue Journals and Communicative Competence

The present study followed a content, form and use model in analyzing deaf students' written conversaton. Until recently, form or syntax has been the component most commonly studied. This is understandable, as syntactic violations are usually the most salient aspect of deaf students' writing. But analyzing syntax alone does not give a full account of the student's writing competence. For example, a decline or lack of growth in syntax may be a function of pragmatic growth with a child expressing a function for which he does not yet have the correct form. Written conversation, like speech, is well suited to investigations of pragmatic and semantic, as well as syntactic, characteristics. Moreover, in written conversation, as in expressive language, competent communication depends on mastery of all three elements; grammatical accuracy alone is not enough.

This point was highlighted in Bill's writing. Though his Spring sample contained more grammatical sentences, the most important change was his style of writing. Bill progressed from writing narrative monologues, to conversational dialogues, appropriate to this context. For deaf students, who are likely to use writing as a mode of communication frequently throughout adult life (Mallory, 1991; Maxwell, 1984), being able to express such functions as persuading, complaining and apologizing with skill, may be a worthwhile goal in itself. Dialogue journals present a valuable opportunity to refine conversational writing competence.

In Laura's and Bill's writing, grammatical correctness was linked to linguistic congruence: that is, as the percentage of grammatical sentences improved in the Spring, so did the frequency of congruence among pragmatics, semantics and syntax. However, this finding did not indicate an improved ability to write complex sentences correctly. Rather, it reflected a greater number of simple, conversational-type utterances. This suggests that conversational writing competence improved without a corresponding improvement in grammatical skill. Therefore, the results support, at the junior high level, those reported by Staton (1990) involving deaf college students: dialogue journal use may not, for a majority of post elementary students, result in assimilation of correct English grammar. Results showing improved

grammatical skills have been demonstrated with younger subjects, age 6-8 years (Staton, 1985). The students in this study were all in the 14-16 age range. As Staton (1990) points out, it may be that older students require much more intensive exposure to interactive writing for syntactic benefits to be widespread. This variable is currently being investigated: "The recent use of computer networks for for written classroom discussions...shows promise of pushing students toward the needed engagement threshold....students sustain three to four hours per week of classroom interaction and tutorial discussions by way of computer screens at each student's desk. In addition, students often use computers for private dialogue journal communication with their teachers" (Staton, 1990, p.39).

With students above the elementary level, who have acquired the basics of reading and writing (albeit imperfectly), the effect of dialgoue journals on literacy may be subtler than improvement in measures of grammatical accuracy. College students who were part of the Dialogue Journal Project at Gallaudet University were found to benefit from dialgoue journal use on broader measures, such as valuing and enjoying the experience, which often led to increased motivation to stay in English classes: "many students who might otherwise have either dropped out of school or avoided all but required English courses chose to re-enroll in

English classes and/or stay in college as a consequence of even a brief experience with dialogue journal communication." (Staton, 1990, p.41). A comment from Scott's Spring sample supports the contention that dialogue journal writing is an enjoyable experience: he did his dialogue journal not only because they were "expected", but also as a way of "spending free time".

As Staton and her colleagues (1990) found in their analyses of college students' dialogue journals, a variety of measures are needed to evaluate the benefits of dialogue journal use with these older students. These include a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures. Surveys of students' and teachers' reactions to using dialogue journals may be helpful: the participants themselves could give insights as to the benefits they experienced. Quantitative measures that "prove" the effects of dialogue journal use may be elusive - dialogue journal use cannot be isolated from the classroom environment in which it occurs. However, it appears that the benefits of dialogue journal use with post elementary students should include linguistic and nonlinguistic (e.g. student motivation, student-teacher rapport) measures. Further, linguistic analysis at the post elementary should include elements of discourse which are important to the development of writing competence such as topic elaboration, cohesion,

and turn-taking.

While the students in this study experienced difficulty using standard English, it did not prevent them from expressing themselves clearly. Even Laura, who had many difficulties with the strucure of written English, was able to get her meaning across almost all the time. Clarity of meaning did not appear to depend on the shared context of the dialogue journal conversations. The researcher, who did not share this contextual knowledge, understood her text remarkably well, demonstrating the resilience of meaning to disruptions in structure. On one hand, this is a positive sign: reading and writing may be experienced as enjoyable, meaningful activities, even though competence in the structure of the language remains elusive. Alternately, this may be a stumbling block to teaching correct grammar: the motivation of learning English structure in order to be understood is reduced.

The observation that meaning remains intact depite substantial syntactic deviation has been documented before in the TDD conversations of hearing impaired teenagers (Geoffrion, 1982). Geoffrion called for further investigation of this observation. One such possibility would be to investigate the effect of a reader's experience with deaf persons' writing on his or her comprehension of

text. Both Geoffrion and this reseacher were experienced in conversing through print with deaf persons. It could be that exposure to the nonstandard form of English used by a majority of deaf persons gave these researchers an edge in following their meaning. Another interesting variable to study would be the shared context of the communication. In this study, shared context did not appear to be a factor in reader comprehension; however, with younger deaf students who are just learning to express themselves in print, contextual salience may be critical to understanding a deaf writer's meaning.

The three students in this study took initiative in establishing topics of conversation and asking questions - behaviors that have been identified as assertive conversational skills (Fey, 1986; Geoffrion, 1982a). However, deaf children may be at risk for developing a passive style of communication in both their expressive and written dialogue - in part, perhaps, as a consequence of teachers' and other adults' controlling interactional style (Wood et al, 1986; Geoffrion, 1982). Passive conversational styles are characterized by lower frequency of topic initiation and question asking. This may have important ramifications for language acquisition and teaching practices: "If frequent practice is an important component of language acquisition, then this passivity presents

important instructional difficulties, since passive communicators end up using the language far less. Consequently,...lack of practice prevents rapid improvement of the language skills" (Geoffrion, 1982, p.106). Contrary to Geoffrion's finding, in this study, low English language proficiency did not result in a passive conversational style. The student with the most difficulty with the structure of English, demonstrated, by her use of questions and initiation of topics, assertive conversational skill. The parity or balance between a student's and teacher's discourse, which is integral to dialogue journal use, may thus be an especially valuable feature for deaf students. One important reason for this equality is that they are "nonreal time interactions" (Kreeft-Peyton, 1988, p.169). The adjacency paring rule does not apply, as it does in face-to-face conversations: "when the first member of a pair is spoken, the second must follow." (Kreeft-Peyton, 1988, p.168). Participants can choose which questions to answer, especially those of a more social-conversational nature, as opposed to an information-seeking nature. In fact, some of the questions in this study seemed to be asked without a response in mind, e.g. "How are you?" Of course, observations regarding assertive conversational styles in the present study do not prove that dialogue journal conversations were responsible. It could be that Laura was an assertive conversationalist in other contexts.

Nonetheless, it is probable that the dialogue journal format did have a part to play.

With regard to syntax, the students in this study made the same kinds of errors - inappropriate form, inappropriate order, inappropriate use, omissions, additions, and substitutions - that have been documented elsewhere (e.g. Paul & Quigley, 1990). Moreover, the types of words they had the most difficulty with - articles (determiners), verbs and prepositions - has also been previoulsy reported (e.g. Staton, 1990). However, one element of the students' English structure stands apart from other studies: their writing could not be described as rigid or stereotypic. That is, the students did not use sentence patterns such as Subject-Verb-Object recurrently. The implication is that rigidity may be at least partly a function of the task. Most studies of deaf children's writing consist of narrative descriptions or essays written in response to a visual or other stimulus (Paul & Quigley, 1990). It would be most interesting to study deaf students' writing across a range of tasks, e.g. formal essay, spontaneously generated description from a selected stimulus, and dialogue. This would allow a better understanding of task variables and subject variables with respect to rigidity.

Dialogue journal writing also presents an opportunity to

study similarities and differences in deaf and hearing children's language, and to compare deaf children with each other. Part of the present study was based on a previous comprehensive analysis of hearing sixth graders' dialgoue journals (Staton et al., 1988). While differences in the size of the data base and differences in coding practices preclude detailed comparison of the two studies, certain trends may be contrasted. A similar range of functions was identified in this study as in that of Staton and her colleagues. While the students in this study were older (grade nine) than those in Staton's (grade six), deaf children may parallel hearing children in their development of pragmatics. This has been found with preschool hearing impaired children in expressive modes (Beattie, 1990). Further research is needed to see if age appropriate pragmatic development is also demonstrated in the written mode.

In both the present study and the one by Staton et al., the students and teacher expressed a comparable range of language functions. However, in his analysis of the language functions expressed in the hearing students' dialogues, Shuy found a greater contrast between students and teacher in the kinds of language functions used. Specifically, the students reported more personal facts and the teacher asked more questions. In the present study, such broad differences in

the use of language functions between the students as a group and the teacher were not apparent. However, such contrasts were found with respect to individual student-teacher dyads. This points to a feature of dialogue journal writing that Staton pointed out: the outcome for each student will depend upon his/her interests, abilities, and relationship with the teacher. The students' writing is affected by the teacher and vice versa.

One kind of question that occurred in this study but was not reported in the Staton (1988) study was the use of rhetorical questions - those questions asked and subsequently answered by the writer: "you don't like me anymore. Why did I write that? That is a joke." Rhetorical questions were used by both Scott and the teacher. They are a common feature of ASL and therefore may indicate the influence of sign language in writing. Other deaf cultural influences included the use of "sk-sk" (literally, "stop keying") as a form of leave-taking, and "ha ha" to indicate humour. Both of these are features of TDD conversations. Dialogue journals could be used to investigate such linguistic and culturally based differences in communcation practices between deaf and hearing students. As more deaf students are mainstreamed, such awareness on the part of both hearing and deaf students may be a practical advantage. Deaf students may benefit by understanding differences in

the ways that hearing people communicate, thereby reducing cultural misunderstanding. As well, dialogue journals between deaf and hearing classmates could be a way to foster the kinds of informal peer-to-peer communication that is often thwarted between deaf and hearing students because of differences in expressive mode. Support for this contention was indicated in a study of telecommunication among hearing impaired and normally-hearing students in grades six, seven and eight. Informal conversations via microcomputers fostered social interactions among hearing impaired and normally hearing peers outside school time (Braden, Booth, Shaw, Leach, & MacDonald, 1989).

Dialogue Journals as a Teaching Technique

In a review of the literature on question asking in the classroom, Kreeft-Peyton (1988) summarizes authoritarian elements of teacher questions in spoken discourse. Teachers ask more questions, thereby controlling topics. Also, teacher questions serve primarily to test students' knowledge. Not so in dialogue journals. Teacher questions primarily solicit information and opinions on personal and school related topics (Kreeft-Peyton, 1988). The teacher in this study, like the one in the Staton et al. (1988) study, used questions to follow up topics the students had initiated. In this way, the teachers' writing was contingent upon the students'. The notion of contingency is similar to

Vygotsky's "interactional scaffolding" and has been investigated by Wood et al. (1986). They define contingency thus:

> To be contingent upon a child, one must offer help and control when when he faces difficulty, and relinquish control and provide opportunities for initiative when he shows signs of success. (p.8)

By avoiding the kinds of controlling questions and directives that teachers typically use in spoken dialogue with their hearing impaired students (Wood et al., 1986), Jan achieved a conversational partnership in which the students had equal opportunity for initiative and the chance to experience success in literacy. Even with a student who had considerable difficulty with the structure of written English, Jan managed to carry on a meaningful dialogue.

In her handling of the decision regarding educational alternatives, Jan displayed contingency by her different handling of the issue among the three students. With Bill, prodding was unnecessary: he took control of the topic and asked numerous questions. With Laura, Jan asked a number of pointed questions, to stimulate her thinking on the topic. With Scott, she provided the structure for him to organize his thoughts. This demonstrates how dialogue journals can be used to tailor common educational goals (in this case, decision making) to individual needs.

In their use of "teaching questions", the two teachers had comparable goals: to encourage reflection and critical thinking. The teacher in the Staton study spent relatively more of her time with such didactic functions than did the teacher in this study. However, a number of differences in their situations may account for this: the teacher in the Staton study had been using dialogue journals for 20 years, whereas the teacher in this study was using them for the first time. As well, the hearing students wrote in their journals every day, whereas the deaf students wrote two to three times a week, and occasionally, did not keep up to this level. Therefore, the teacher of the hearing students had more opportunity to use these functions.

Limitations of the Study

With a primarily decriptive study such as this, trends or patterns in the students'and teacher's data are tentative and suggestive. With respect to the results obtained for the three students, three limitations are evident. Firstly, potentially influencing variables were not controlled. Changes in the students' writing could have been affected by maturation, educational factors such as language arts instruction, or non-educational factors such as conversational writing for personal use via the TDD. In future studies, a control group could be used to strengthen the confidence with which results could be attributed

specifically to dialogue journal writing. Secondly, contextual differences between the Fall and Spring samples - i.e. "open topic" versus "constrained topic" - could have accounted for some of the differences found in the students' writing. Thirdly, the results were based on the judgements of one person, namely the researcher. Having others code and score the data would strengthen the reliability of judgements made.

Summary and Conclusion

The present study employed a sentence level analysis of three language components: language function (pragmatics), clarity of meaning (semantics), and grammaticality (syntax). Trends and changes in language use and structure were apparent. Moreover, dialogue journals allowed for analysis of the teacher's language use and hypotheses about how it affected her students' writing. The results of this study support the view that competence in writing should not be measured by syntax alone. In dialogue journal writing, communicative competence depends on congruence among pragmatics, semantics, and syntax.

Changes in congruence, or writing competence, at the sentence level was demonstrated for two of the students in this study. The third student, who had the most sophisticated writing of the three, did not show similar

improvements. It may be that for some junior-high students, with a higher language level, linguistic improvements at the discourse level would be more apparent than at the sentence level, while a sentence level analysis may be helpful for analyzing the text of younger writers, who are just beginning to express themselves in print.

Analyses of language functions in the three deaf students indicated they were using a comparable range to those of their teacher and younger hearing writers. Pragmatic analyses of young deaf children, in expressive modes, indicate normal, age appropriate development (Beattie, 1990). However, normative data are not available expressing such functions via the written mode. Comprehensive study of a larger number of deaf students' dialogue journals, would be an important addition to our state of knowledge.

REFERENCES

Beattie, R. (1990). Pragmatic Language Competencies of Hearing Impaired Preschool Children. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

Bloom, L., & Lahey, M. (1978). Language Development and Language Disorders. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Braden, J., Booth, K., Shaw, S., Leach, J., & MacDonald, B. (1989). The effects of microcomputer telecommunication on hearing-impaired children's literacy and language. Volta Review, 143-149.

Bruner, J.S. (1977). Early social interaction and language acquisition. In H.R. Schaffer (Ed.), Studies in Mother-Infant Interaction (pp.187-210). London: Academic Press.

Canadian Association of the Deaf (May, 1989). Deaf demonstrate across Canada. (Press Release).

Fey, M.E. (1986). Language Intervention With Young Children. San Diego: College Hill Press.

Geoffrion, L.D. (1982). The ability of hearing impaired

students to communicate using a teletype system. Volta Review, 84, (2), 96-108.

Johnson, H.A., & Barton, L.E. (1988). TDD conversations: a context for language sampling and analysis. American Annals of the Deaf, 133, (1), 19-25.

John-Steiner, V. & Tatter P. (1983) An interactionist model of language development. In B. Bain (Ed.), The Sociogenesis of Language and Human Conduct (pp 79-97). New York: Plenum.

Kreeft-Peyton, J. (1988). Dialogue writing - bridge from talk to essay writing. In J.Staton, R.W. Shuy, J.K. Peyton, & L. Reed, Dialogue Journal Communication: Classroom, Linguistic, Social and Cognitive Views (pp. 88-106). Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Kretschmer, R., & Kretschmer, L. (1978). Language Development and Intervention with the Hearing Impaired. Baltimore: University Park Press.

Lindfors, J. (1987). Children's Language and Learning. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Mallory, B. (1991). Intergenerational Communication in Deaf-Parented Families. Unpublished research paper.

Maxwell, M. (1985). Some functions and uses of literacy in the deaf community. Language in Society, 14, 205-221.

McAnally, P., Rose, S., & Quigley, S. (1987). Language Learning Practices with Deaf Children. Boston: College Hill Press.

McGinnis, M. (1983). Social language: toward fluency and flexibility. Volta Review, 87, 101-114.

Moores, D. (1982). Educating the Deaf: Psychology, Principles and Practices. Boston: Houghton Miffin.

Paul, P., & Quigley, S. (1990). Education and Deafness. New York: Longman.

Quigley, S. & Paul, P. (1984). Language and Deafness. San Diego: College Hill Press.

Rubin, D.L. (1987). Divergence and convergence between oral and written communication. Topics in Language Disorders, 7, (4), 1-18.

Schirmer, B. (1985). An analysis of the language of your hearing-impaired children in terms of syntax, semantics, and use. American Annals of the Deaf, 3, 15-19.

Shuy, R.W. (1988). The oral language basis for dialogue journals. In J. Staton, R.W. Shuy, J.K. Peyton, & L. Reed, Dialogue Journal Communication: Classroom, Linguistic, Social and Cognitive Views (pp.73-87). Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex.

Shuy, R.W. (1988). Sentence level language functions. In J. Staton, R.W. Shuy, J.K. Peyton, & L. Reed, Dialogue Journal Communication: Classroom, Linguistic, Social and Cognitive Views (pp.107-142). Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex.

Staton, J. (1990). Conversations in Writing: A Guide For Using Dialogue Journals With Deaf Post-Secondary and Secondary Students. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University.

Staton, J. (1985). Using dialogue journals for developing thinking, reading, and writing with hearing impaired students. Volta Review, 87, (5), 127-154.

Staton, J., Shuy, R.W., Peyton, J.K., & Reed, L. (1988). Dialogue Journal Communication: Classroom, Linguistic,

Social and Cognitive Views. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex.

Van Kleek, A. (1984). Metalinguistic skills: cutting across spoken and written language and problem-solving abilities. In G.P. Wallach & K.G. Butler (Eds), Language Learning Disabilities in School-Age Children. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins.

Wallach, G.P. & Miller, L. (1988). Language Intervention and Academic Success. Boston: Little, Brown & Company.

Webster, A. (1986). Deafness, Development, and Literacy. London: Methuen.

Wood, D., Wood, H., Griffiths, A., & Howarth, I. (1986). Teaching and Talking with Deaf Children. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Wood, M. (1982). Language Disorders in School-Age Children. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Appendix A

Language Function Categories

A. Reporting Functions

1. Reporting Personal Facts: "This type of reporting concerns events related specifically and personally to the writer. It can be an event that happened to the writer or to those immediate to, and in some way connected to, the writer" (Shuy, 1988, p.113). Examples from the present study include:

Laura: last couple of week ago or two week ago so my dad give me an 1 dollar for my pass test.

Bill: In lunch time I played hockey in the school.

2. Reporting General Facts: "What is reported differs from personal facts...in that it is not specific to the writer directly or indirectly. General Facts are widely shared and (in many cases) objective facts or generalizations" (Shuy, 1988, p.113). Examples include:

Jan: Every student is so different.

Bill: If Blue Jay win 4 games, Then they advance to World Series.

3. Predicting: "The function of predicting includes all entries in which the writer expresses an indication that he or she will do something in the future" (Shuy, 1988, p.114). Such statements do not necessarily involve the future tense. Following Shuy, statements of hopes or intentions are

included in this category:

Jan: I hope to have some good relationships with other students but each one will be different.

Scott: for my plan career, maybe an Actor.

B. Affective Functions

4. Reporting Opinions: These are statements in which the writer expresses, in the present tense, a feeling or state of being:

Scott: I wish that I could change Art to typewriting or microcomputer with you, same as Block 1 for girls.

Jan: P.S. I like your hair color!

5. Evaluating: These are statements in which the writer assesses other people or events:

Laura: That my good time to ride on a taxi.; He just a lucky boy. Jan: Sounds like you had a pretty good weekend.

C. Requestive Functions

6. Requesting: All question forms - "Wh", "yes/no", "tag" - with the exception of rhetorical questions, are included in this category:

Laura: How was your weekend.

Jan: [---] boys went to [X School] right? ;

Do you still want to ?

7. Giving Directives: "the writer indicates, directly or indirectly, his or her desire for the reader to bring about

the state of affairs expressed by the proposition (Shuy, 1990, p.115). Examples include:

Scott: please try to write same as page 29.

Laura: please you will tell her to say hi from me.

D. Responsive Functions

8. Responding: "When the entry of either student or teacher is clearly indicated as a response to a question, which was asked by the other writer in an immediately preceding entry, it was marked as a response to a question. Such reports were usually also reports of opinions, personal facts or general facts. Thus, they were marked as the simultaneous functions of responding to questions, and one...of these reporting functions" (Shuy, 1988, p.114).

9. Reiterating: These include word-for-word repetitions of a previous sentence written by the other person, or unsolicited statements that serve to re-establish a previous topic. Examples include:

Bill: You said that Houses and apartments are expensive in Toronto.

Jan: First about [---] and her words to you.

E. Social-Conversational Functions

10. Using Performatives: These consist of expressions and exclamations that do not, in themselves, impart content. Examples include:

Jan: Yum Yum!

By the way, what in the world were you watching in the movie Indiana Jones???

Scott: Well, um...

11. Opening: Formulaic greetings comprise this category:

Laura: Hello to [---]!

Scott: HEY! SCARE [---]!

12. Closing: These are statements that indicate leave-taking:

Laura: have a such nice long weekend and I will see you on tuesday Oct.10/89.

Scott: that enough for now.

13. Confirming: These are statements that affirm a previous statement or proposition:

Jan: When I see [---] again, I will say hi to her from you. No problem.;

If this is your private business and don't want to tell me, that's OK.

14. Denying: Only one instance of denying occurred in the data. It was a particular kind of opinion:

Scott: No' I don't mean I want to date you but how nice you have been to me.

15. Apologizing: An apology is "an expression of regret for having injured, insulted, or wronged another person, specifically the person apologized to" (Shuy, 1988, p.115). Scott had the only instances of apologizing in this study,

for example:

Scott: Sorry if you are waiting but finally you get my talk book...

16. Asking Rhetorical Questions: These are questions which are asked, then immediately answered, by the writer. Examples include:

Jan: you don't like me anymore. Why did I write that? That is a joke.

Scott: Sorry but I didn't hand you this. Why? cannot located this and R.J.

17. Teasing: Propositions which were clearly not intended to be taken seriously and questions with a mocking or sarcastic tone were labelled as teasing. Examples include:

Jan: You lost your right hand in the dishwasher and can't write.;

P.P.P.P.S. Is this letter long enough for you?

18. Promising: "The language function of promising...contains a pledge for specific actions or things" (Shuy, 1988, p.117). The only instance of promising in the data was expressed by the teacher:

Jan: Please wait until we know more & when we can tell you we'll let you know OK.

19. Offering: Sentences which "display[ed] a willingness to perform a service, or give something" (Shuy, 1988, p.117) were coded as offering. Scott was the only participant to use this function in the sample:

Scott: but there's not much I can talk about but I will try.

20. Praising: Sentences which expressed approval were coded as praising. There was only one such instance, by the teacher, in the data:

Jan: Good for him.

Appendix B

Request for Participation

and

Consent Form

DIALOGUE JOURNAL RESEARCH

The use of a dialogue journal in deaf education is still quite unique. This being the case, more research is wanting to be done particularly in Canada. I am interested in doing some research in this area or to discuss this idea and what I have done this year with other colleagues. As well, I have been contacted by another researcher who would like to do research in this area and found out I was using dialogue journals. It is a big compliment to be approached on this but [illegible]uld also be of great interest to all the students as well. I hope you will be interested in participating in this research by allowing your dialogue journal to be used in order to find out more about dialogue journals and the benefits to deaf students. Research is very confidential. Your privacy will be respected fully. Your name and any other identifying information will not be used. If you are interested in this research, please sign the attached release forms.

Please bring your dialogue journal to school on Monday, June 25th. Thankyou for participating. By doing this, you are helping improve deaf education for all students.

DIALOGUE JOURNAL RELEASE

I, _____ give Susan Greaves permission to use my dialogue journal on the understanding that it will be used for research and that my name and other identifying information will be strictly confidential.

_____ _____
name date

_____ _____
researcher date

_____ _____
witness date

Appendix C

Dialogue Journal Samples

15

Oct 3/89

Hello to me [ ]!

That my good time to write on a
topic - I wish to get for my birthday
is next on this November so I wish
to get [illegible] for to wear out a choo
early - this afternoon so not is cold.
Today my mom is made a cookie
when I got home from school.
My Mom & my brother are still watch T.V
program called highway to heavens
I try to finish my my homework
done before we go out, to somewhere.
I finished my math very quick time.
So how was your day doing at home?
I don't know - I have no idea. - last sunday
I keep watch the movies called the adventure
the Wildness family.
I a great evening tonight.
did you have any pets?
I have a pet - dogs, cat, birds.
are you going have a great evening.
I have no idea to buy a birthday
present for my birthday ones next
Oct 11/89 that was pretty soon.
We have to celebrating to make birthday.
to my brother [ ] he almost 12 yrs old this
pretty old - look to me.

Good Bye to [ ]

Dear [ ] Oct 6/89.

Wow! You sure wrote to me about a lot of different things. To be honest, I am having a hard time understanding all of it in my mind. Please write in paragraphs to separate your ideas.

I hope I'll have a nice long weekend. I will go out for not one but two Turkey dinners. First I'll go to my parents-in-laws afterschool tonight, then later this weekend I'll be going out to the lake for another dinner with my parents! Yum yum. I like turkey. I also like visiting with my relatives. It's a good time to catchup on what they are doing in their lives. It is also relaxing.

You only have a few more shopping days left until turns 12. So you think she is looking pretty old. Well, what does he look like?

Have a nice long weekend [ ]. I'll see you on Tuesday, October the 10th.

(6)

I had a good long weekend today but I had to ~~go~~ do finish all my homework before school start Apr 2/1900.

I'm a trouble talking ~~but~~ because my ~~the~~ throat is hurt and hard to talk are do you know how I got sore throat? from the bad cold.

How was your Long Spring Break?

My Spring Break was just fine!

Are you ready to go back to work and are you happy the Spring Break was over?

yeah I am happy too that Spring Break is so over!

(can't wait until June the end of school year I go to Georgia to Georgia with my aunt. on the vacation

oct 9

Hey, [I

its not true I don't like you, because I were writing this talk book in the car this morning, I have problem to take under my control in my writing during traveling to downtown. Well I am sorry if I kept ya' waiting for my letter. But I am sure I will try to remember to write down the letter more often, your's right I am not using my time at home.

One thing bothering me at school is Art, Art is not right for my life, I don't feel comfort with it, I wish that I could change Art to Typewriting or minor Computer with you same as Black for your girls. But I have discussed with Mr. [ ] about it, he said that that will be done on Tuesday Oct 10th. I don't know what is the result.

Anyway I want to answer your question, "what does Rate R for language mean?

→

Sorry but I didnt hand you this why? cannot located this and R.J. but today I located it! . . . They were on the my book shelf and I cannot see because high. So . . . .

Your turn!!

April 4, 1990

Hi there [I
To Scare [ ]
Hmm Hmm. I'll have to think about that.

Yes, you are an impressive skiier. You look like you really are enjoying it. I wish I really liked skiing, but I don't. I am however, glad that I joined you all on the fieldtrip to [ ]
It was a great way to spend the day. I think you should call me

Brave, courageous, adventurous, positive, good sport [ ]

play on any baseball teams? If yes, what positions have you played in the past?

Well, until next time.

M.S [ ]

Blue Jays lost last Night Oct 4. 1989

Blue Jays lost to Oakland but Blue Jays will play against A's (Oakland's team) in American league Final and World Series semi final. Oakland won 7-3 over Blue Jays. Blues Jays catcher Ernie Whitt hit a home run. Oakland outfielder Dave Henderson also hit a home run. Other Oakland first baseman Mark McGwire shot homer. Oakland leads 1-0 in best of seven game series I hope Blue Jays win this afternoon.

also Chicago will play San Fransico Giants in Chicago. The game in Chicago get very cold outside A's and Blue Jays game get warm in Oakland. On Friday A's and Blue Jays will play in Toronto. I think the game get warm because of close roof in Skydome.

You asked me about question that your last letter. You said Do you play on any baseball Teams? Yes I played on school softball team in 1st year and little league

[ ] alcready setted a cheap program. I hope Mr [ ] will teach me ins Math.

April 22 (6)

Dear Mrs [ ]

How are you? I am fine. I went to the church. I was asign ~~in~~ to the music in the church. I am really nervous. Miss Hung was interpreting for me. She is not good interpreter. I will go to bed at 11:30 because I wount to walch a hockey game.

I think my courses are finished for next year.

P.S - My dad will work in [ ]. He helps with many workers.

P.S.S I really am fun on Friday. In lunch time I played hocke in the school. My team won